

## Plum Pox or Sharka of Stone Fruits February, 2006

Plum pox is the most destructive viral disease worldwide of stone fruits which include such trees as peaches, plums, apricots, almonds, cherries, and nectarines. Native plums in Kansas are also believed to be susceptible to the viral disease.

**Fig. 1. Infected peach fruit, USDA .**



In 1999, the first report in North America was made in Pennsylvania and was subsequently found at other sites within the state in 2000. The disease was also detected in Ontario that year. The strain that was found in Pennsylvania was PPV-D which is not known to be seed transmitted and infects peach, plum, and apricot. Regulatory measures were taken in those areas and the disease is believed to be not present in Pennsylvania currently.

A national survey of fruit tree nurseries and orchards followed the discovery of Plum Pox in Pennsylvania. In Kansas only a few stone fruit orchards are present and represented by pick your own growers or orchards supplying local farmers markets. Surveillance by the Kansas Department of Agriculture of various peach, apricot, cherry, nectarine, and plum plantings, nurseries, and fruit stands have been negative along with other extensive surveys in states across the nation.

Infected plants display a variety of symptoms from ringspots, yellowing line patterns and blotches on leaves, leaf drop, fruit distortion, and necrotic brown rings of fruit and leaves. The disease is transmitted by infected aphids or through the movement and planting of infected nursery stock or propagative material. The disease does not represent a direct health hazard from consumption.

If you think that your trees or the fruit which you possess has been infected with plum pox, please contact your local county extension office or the Kansas Department of Agriculture (785) 862-2180.